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I WOULD RATHER BE RIGHT THAN PRESIDENT.—HENRY CLAY.

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The Bird in the Linden.

A little bird sang on a linden-tree,
In the balmy days of spring;
When his lay of love woke a voice in me,
And I essayed to sing.
The song of the bird was merry and glad,
As song of a bird might be;
My answering strain was mournful and sad,
As I sat 'neath that linden-tree.

For close by the bird on the linden-tree
Perched a mate with folded wing;
But never a mate was there for me,
To listen while I might sing.
My spring was past, and my life was lone,
Love never had beamed on me;
I could not echo the joyous tone
Of that bird on the linden-tree.

The little bird sang on the linden-tree
When summer was warm and bright,
And, oh! I could answer his minstrelsy
With a song of deep delight.
For the heart I had long despaired to gain
Had blossomed with love for me;
Oh, joy! we were one who had once been twain,
And we sat 'neath that linden-tree.

A STROKE OF BUSINESS.

I peeped in timidly, but to my great delight he was alone.

"My dear Miss Bernice," he exclaimed, warmly taking me by both hands, "this is indeed a pleasure! Sit right down here, and tell me what is the matter, for I know you would never have bearded the old fellow in his den for nothing."

"There is a great deal the matter," said I, desperately, as I began to feel my nicely prepared speech slipping entirely away from me.

"I am sorry to hear it," he replied, looking grave immediately, and evidently expecting some overwhelming communication.

I tried to begin as I had intended, but it would not come, and exhausted with nervous excitement, I burst into tears.—Then, everything came out in a perfect stream, without being "sorted" at all; and there was the strangest mixture of all my hopes and fears, and projects, and my intention of buying a house in the same breath that I acknowledged myself unable to pay for one room, until my hearer looked quite stunned, and evidently began to wonder if I had lost my senses.

Then he looked amused, and presently he said:

"My dear girl, there is no need of crying; let us examine this matter rationally. You wish, you say, to buy a small house, that you may have a more desirable room for your school, and lessen the expense of rent. Strikes me as a particularly sensible idea. As to the money part, you will not be obliged to pay the whole sum down. How much have you at your command?"

"I have just one thousand dollars in the world," I replied, shortly.

"*One thousand dollars!*" repeated Mr. Portman, in amazement. "You cannot really mean it! The daughter of my old friend Edward Mapleton reduced to this! Why did you not let me know this before?"

"I would not have told you now," said I, proudly, "had you not asked me."

The old gentleman walked about the office, shaking his head in a very disapproving way. "Poor child!" said he, "poor child!"

"I am not so very much to be pitied," said I, determined to assert myself to the last; "I have youth and health, and although I do labor under the disadvantage of being a woman, I intend to accomplish something yet. I will never be dependent on any one, except for kindness; but if you are willing, Mr. Portman, to lend me whatever is required above my thousand—"

"Willing!" he exclaimed, warmly; "I would be willing, Bernice, to do far more, but if this is the only assistance you will accept, let us go at once and look at the house."

My heart was considerably lightened as we set forth, and directed our steps to No. 40 Plum street. We found Messrs. Broad and Long in the shape of one hard-looking gentleman, who was neither broad nor long, excepting by name.

He eyed us critically, and then said, in an indifferent way, "Yes—neat little house—owner going West—No 99 Lumbago street."

Mr. Portman eyed every part of the house very critically, and when the agent left us for a moment, he told me that it was very well built, and that the price, $4,000, was exceedingly moderate.

"You could probably get $5,000 for it, after a little time, if you wished to sell," said he.

This was a new view of the case, and it set me thinking more desperately than ever. Make a clear $1,000 after paying Mr. Portman what I owed him, and thus double my money! It was quite exciting, and I felt disposed to go at once into the real estate business.

The end of all was that the house became mine, at least nominally, for I always felt that it really belonged to Mr. Portman; and when the deed was executed and placed in my hands, I almost doubted my own identity. My æsthetic soul, however, received a severe shock in the wording of the document, wherein I was stigmatized as "Bernice Mapleton, *spinster*." How much more agreeable to my feelings the term "damsel" or "maiden" would have been! I tried to remember that I was only twenty-four, but "spinster" sounded like forty, at least. A spinster or not, though, the house was mine; and I, almost a pauper, was actually a property-holder.

"Now," said Mr. Portman, cheerfully, when the matter was all arranged, "I really think, Miss Bernice, that this is the brightest thing you have done for many a day."

"That *you* have done, you mean," I murmured.

"No," he replied, stoutly, "my noddle didn't hatch out the plan at all; the credit of it belongs to you. And unless I am a false prophet, your fortune will date from this very day."

Mr. Portman knew of a young married couple, just from Maine, who would be glad to occupy the remainder of my house; and before long they were installed there, at a rent that covered all expense, and left my school-room rent free!

I began to have quite a respect for my business qualities. The bride was just the sweetest little thing I ever saw, and she would bring her sewing into the school-room, and listen to my style of teaching, and declare that she ought to be regularly entered as a pupil, and pay her tuition fee like the others.

I took great pride in my new school-room, and two new scholars from the neighborhood came to supply the place of those I had lost. Every one prophesied brilliant success for me in the spring, and I looked forward hopefully.

I had not been long in possession of my house when I was informed, one evening, that a gentleman wished to see me in the parlor. Now, my room looked particularly cozy and pleasant, and I was, moreover, writing—deep in a story that promised to be a great success. My hair was somewhat tumbled about, but rather picturesquely, and quite forgetful of my little apron, I concluded to go down just as I was. Probably some pompous-looking father of a family awaited me, with a string of questions about my school; and trying to assume a proper expression of dignity, I walked into the room.

Rather a tall gentleman was bending over Miss Plidget's photograph album—the grand ornament of the center table, and although the gas was miserably low, I could see that he was just then occupied by *my* picture, or with that of Miss Plidget herself who was just opposite to it.—He seemed quite absorbed, and did not hear me when I came in.

The visitor was young and fine looking, with a frank, determined face, that would win its way anywhere. On the card that I received was written "Geo. Helmwood." Surely *he* could not have any children to place at school? What could he possibly want with me?

He looked around surprised when I turned up the gas, and glanced hastily from me to the album again. He bowed to me politely as he said, "I called to see Miss Mapleton—I was told that she lives here."

"I am Miss Mapleton," I replied rather surprised.

"A lady who has a school on Lumbago street," he contined, hesitatingly, "who owns a house there."

I pleaded guilty to both these charges, and the gentleman looked both amused and embarrassed.

"Pardon me," he said, presently, with a smile, "I—I expected to see an older lady. I scarcely know how to begin."

"Is it anything about the school?" I asked, by way of helping him.

"No," was the reply; "it is about the house. The truth is, Miss Mapleton, I want to buy the house—or rather my father does—and he has authorized me to negotiate for it. Have you any desire to sell it?"

"I have only just bought it," said I scarcely knowing what else to say; "and my school is there. Besides, it is rented for a year."

"Will you let my father call and see you about it?" asked my visitor, after a pause. "The truth is, I—I do not understand such business very well. My father is willing to give $10,000 for the property—he *must* have it, if possible."

Was I really in my sober senses? Ten thousand dollars! I must have looked and acted in an expressibly silly manner, for Mr. Helmwood soon took his leave without arriving at any understanding whatever, except that I was to receive a visit from his father.

The next day I rushed down to Mr. Portman for instructions.

"Bravo! Miss Bernice," said he, laughing, when he had heard my story, "you will turn out a woman of fortune yet. I know the Helmwoods well—very nice people indeed—and the *son*, let me tell you, is particularly nice. Father and son are in business together, and their large importing warehouse is on the street back of your premises. By extending their place they will probably realize a few hundred thousand from increased business, and they can therefore well afford to pay you $10,000 to get you out of the way.—Let them do it, by all means."

Thus fortified I was quite ready for Mr. Helmwood, senior, who was a remarkably fine-looking old gentleman, not unlike his son, and who stared at me during the interview as though he had a dim recollection of having seen me before. He was quite at his ease, and I felt much less embarrassed in discussing business matters with him than with his son; there was, moreover, a warmth and urbanity in his manner that quite charmed me.

"Now, my dear young lady!" said he, in a quick earnest way, "the facts of the case are just these: I do not wish to be regarded by you in the light of a filibuster, nor as coveting what is legally and properly yours; but I have had my eye on that property for some time past; and it was only lately, while in a neighboring city on a matter of business, that I was informed that it was for sale. I immediately wrote to George to secure it at once; but he wrote back that it had been bought by a single lady for a school. (And here I may as well say in parenthesis that you do not at all answer the idea we had formed of the single lady in question, and I cannot help looking on you in some sort as an imposter.) I then marched George immediately off to this elderly maiden of our imaginations to see if she could be prevailed upon to sell at an advance. The young man, however, returned in an unsettled state of mind, having evidently failed to bring you to terms, and coolly requested me to finish the business myself. I believe Miss Mapleton that you paid $4,000 for the house. I will double that amount willingly."

I bit my lip to keep from smiling.—Truly the son *was* unbusiness-like. "I did not buy the house to sell again," I replied, very quietly.

"I know it. You bought it, of course, for your school, and I suppose it just suits you; but, unfortunately, it just suits me too. Would $9,000 tempt you?"

I remained silent, fearful that if I spoke, I should laugh.

"Now," said Mr. Helmwood, rising in his earnestness, "I *must* have the place! and, rather than lose it, I will give you $10,000 for it."

"That is just what your son offered me at first," I replied, without raising my eyelashes.

"The young idiot!" exclaimed his father laughing. "Pray, how did he word his offer, if you can recall it?

"To the best of my recollection he said: 'My father is willing to give $10,000 for the property—he *must* have it, if possible.'"

[illegible] heartily laughing at me in your sleeve all this time!" said my visitor. "I am willing to give $10,000 for the property, but I preferred it for $8,000, which is considerably above its value to any one but myself. Is it a bargain, then, at $10,000?"

"Mr. Helmwood," said I, as I felt the color rising in my face, "one thing you will please remember in this matter—I did not offer my property for sale, nor had I any idea of disposing of it; but much to my surprise, I was solicited by you to part with it. I am not a 'sharp woman'—a character that I particularly detest—as I have lost nearly all the little I possessed in foolish ventures; and after your son's visit to me I went, much perplexed, to consult my friend, Mr. Portman, through whose assistance I was enabled to buy the house. He advised me to accept Mr. George Helmwood's offer, and explained to me that you would be an immense gainer by purchasing my little property, even at this extravagant price. I have a great horror of taking advantage of any one, and I was afraid that it might not be quite right to receive so much more for a thing that I had given so little for."

"My dear Miss Mapleton," replied Mr. Helmwood, with a manner of great respect, "I should never think of fastening upon you the term of a 'sharp woman;' but you will not object, I hope, to my regarding you as a remarkably clever young lady. You are quite right in saying that the property is worth more than $10,000 to me; and I give it the more cheerfully since I have seen the owner. But I shall certainly have a good laugh at George for his style of doing business. Perhaps, however, had I been his age instead of mine, I should not have acquitted myself any better."

This was rather embarrassing, and I hastened to say: "Mr. George Helmwood could not have mentioned to you that I have rented the premises."

"Oh, yes; he did say something of the kind. But I will undertake to reconcile the inmates to a change of residence, provided I have your consent to proceed in the matter."

Finally I gave it; it seemed to be the best thing I could do; and just as he was leaving, Mr. Helmwood scrutinized me closely, as he asked:

"Will you allow me to inquire, Miss Mapleton, if Mr. Sylvester Willingfleet is a relative of yours?"

"He was my grandfather," I replied.

"I am very glad to hear it!" he exclaimed, seizing my hand warmly. "He was one of the old merchants of this city, and a valued friend of mine. Many a pleasant hour have I passed in his hospitable mansion where, besides entertaining his equals, there was an especial table set for the poor every day. The grand daughter of such a man should not—"

"Be earning her own living!" said I seeing that he hesitated. "His grand daughter, sir, does not consider that she is disgracing either him or herself by such a course."

I knew my head went up an inch or two, and that my eyes flashed, for he said, kindly, "You have just his look—a little haughty at times, for he was a thorough bred old aristocrat. I was troubled the first moment I saw you to decide whom you resembled so strongly. And now, my dear young lady, you will, I hope, allow us to look upon you as a friend. My wife will call at once, and I hope very soon to welcome you at our house, as I have been so often welcomed at your grandfather's."

"Well, Bernice Mapleton," said I, when I found myself alone with that individual, "what do you think of yourself now?—Are you really yourself, or somebody else? Or have you been dreaming these bewildering things?"

Mr. Portman congratulated me on my good fortune, laughing heartily at my account of the interview with Mr. Helmwood; and by the next morning, I was so fully persuaded that things were what they seemed that I bought a pound of French candy to celebrate the event, and tried to inveigle Miss Plidget into sharing the feast with me. But that wary female, who was given to dyspepsia and other absurdities, solemnly worked her way thro' one sugar plum, analyzing it all the while as though it had been a piece of quartz, or something else equally indigestible, and then absolutely refused to touch any more.

I was engaged in exploring the recesses of the neat little bonbon bag, when Mrs. Helmwood was announced; and I went to receive a warm embrace from the most elegant looking not old, but middle aged, lady I had ever seen. Her features were regular and beautiful, she was perfectly dressed, and had the air of a dowager duchess. She insisted on my going home with her at once on a visit, declared, in answer to my objections, that I was not a stranger, as she had known my grandfather well, and finally, I was deposited in a lovely square room, surrounded by every luxury, and expected to remain for an indegnite period.

There were no daughters, and only that one son; so Mrs. Helmwood declared that it was a real charity for a young lady to enliven their dullness. It was certainly a very pleasant task, as I enlivened my own at the same time; and I felt very thankful for the advantage of having had a grandmother.

Master George and I were rather shy of each other at first; but this gradually wore off—and some how or other we found ourselves alone together very frequently. I tried to avoid this, for I had no desire to repay these people's kindness to me by taking their son from them, for whom, they probably had some grander match in store. But one day the young gentleman made some exceedingly incoherent remarks to me, and drew a highly-colored picture of our first meeting—in which "my careless hair" and "coquettish little apron" (it had a great blot of ink in one corner, but fortunately he did not see that) figured largely, and the "exquisite picture" in Miss Plidget's album came in for a share of the general enthusiasm, and I conducted myself in consequence very much like an idiot, and came very near forgetting everything, until I suddenly remembered to assure him that his father and mother would probably be anything but pleased at such arrangement, and that I could never consent to enter a family that was not desirous of receiving me.

My lover suddenly disappeared, and returned with his father.

"It seems to me, young lady," said the older gentlemen with a very quizzical look, "that in all George's transactions with you I am brought in to finish the business. I would have nothing to do with such a stupid fellow. Your very honorable conduct, my dear little girl, only makes me more anxious than ever to welcome you as a daughter; and if I had entertained any objections to such a *finale*, do you think I would have been weak enough to expose my son to the peril of daily contact with a girl like you?"

I had nothing to say to this; and Mr. Helmwood took me in his arms and kissed me, and then led me to his wife, from whom I received an equally warm welcome.

It is needless to say that those five infants on whom I had expended so much surplus energy were turned out to pasture without any compunctions of conscience; and the young couple from Maine were provided with a larger domicile, and some very nice furniture to put in it.

Mr. Portman would not allow me to pay my debt to him, but insisted upon its being appropriated to my trousseau; and my identical gold bonds were returned to me just as I had given them to him. He had the pleasure of giving me away; but he said that the fact of my never having belonged to him made this considerable easier.

My father-in-law declared that he rather outwitted me, after all, as the money was all in the family.

A coffin-maker was asked whom he was making for, and mentioned the intended.

"Why, he is not dead, man!" said the querist.

"Don't you trouble yourself," replied the other; "Dr. Coe told us to make his coffin, and I guess he knows what he gave him."

Moving into New Houses.

That death frequently ensues after moving into a new house is unquestionably true, but examination will prove that it is due to the imprudence of the occupant in many cases. The most frequent cause of such an event is the state of the undried plastering. It is, however, sometimes occasioned by the entire change of habits, which follows what is frequently a decisive step upward in the career of the owner. Sand is used in constructing plaster for the simple reason that when the lime itself hardens there shall be a material dispersed through it as hard as itself. Water is the agent which produces this effect. When that is suddenly absorbed, from contact with porous bricks, or from exposure to powerful heats, or drying winds, the necessary union is not formed, and the material, instead of being mortar, consists of slacked lime and dry sand. When the water is allowed to remain in the mixture the hardening process goes on, but proceeds slowly. A mason, examined as a witness in this city some years ago, testified that mortar in a thick wall was twenty or thirty years in acquiring its full solidity. The process is somewhat like that by which nature converts certain minerals in the earth into stone.

When plaster is applied to laths it dries rapidly and thoroughly, but yet it is wholly unsafe to inhabit a dwelling only recently plastered. When a house is occupied too soon it is as if the walls consisted of water and the dampness were inhaled at every breath. Very obstinate cases of sickness proceed from this cause.

When sleep is affected by damp walls sore throat or a cold follows in eight or ten days, attended with an extraordinary difficulty of recovery. The main cause, the dampness of the house, is a continuing cause of disease.

Many houses are now being constructed for occupancy this spring. The assertion that they are thoroughly dried will unquestionably be made by persons having them for sale or to let; and although many of them will be stimulated by ambitious wives and husbands to move into them for the sake of losing no time in making appropriate display, it will be far wiser to wait for a whole year after a house is finished, and use in the winter furnaces, and in summer drying winds, to render it safely habitable.

Although moving from a dry to a damp house ought to be regarded as a sufficient cause for serious ill-health, there are but few [illegible] in the interest of many persons to keep the [illegible] cause away from observation, in order that new houses may not remain on their hands unoccupied by tenants, and also that there may be patients needing to be cured. The condition in this respect of the house into which one designs moving cannot be too carefully weighed, or a new case may be furnished to aid the too popular conviction which ignorance so readily assigns in such cases as a cause of death if it occur.

CLIMAX.—"My son," said an affectionate father at the foot of the stairs, "arise and see the newly risen luminary of day and hear the sweet birds singing their matin song of praise to their great Creator; come, while the dew is on the grass and tender lambs are bleating on the hillside; come, I say, or I'll be up there with a switch, and give you the soundest thrashing that you ever had in all your born days."

DANIEL WEBSTER penned the following beautiful sentiment: "If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon our immortal minds—if we imbue them with principles, with the just fear of God and love of our fellow men we engrave on those tablets something which will brighten for all eternity."

A COUNTRYMAN, seeing for the first time a pair of snuffers, asked:

"What's them for?"

"To snuff the candle."

The candle just then needed attention and with his thumb and finger he pinched off the snuff, and carefully put it into the snuffers, saying:

"Well, now, them is handy!"

William, thee knows I never call anybody names; but, William, if the Mayor of the city were to come to me and say, John, I want thee to find me the biggest liar in all Philadelphia, I would come to thee and put my hand on thy shoulder, and say thee, William, the Mayor wants to see thee.

A YOUNG lady went into a fashionable music store the other day, and asked the polite proprietor if he had "any feline intestines for lyrical purposes?" She wanted cat-gut guitar strings. For once in his life the young man "weakened," and carried out on a canceled postage stamp.

A YOUNG lady—a sensible girl—gives the following catalogue of different kinds of love:—The sweetest a mother's love; the longest, a brother's love; the strongest a woman's love; the dearest a man's love; and the sweetest, longest, strongest, and best love—a love of a bonnet.

THE man who "couldn't stand it any longer," has taken a seat and feels quite comfortable.